

# **Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project**

## **Coordination Plan**

Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act:  
A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) Section 6002

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U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Transit Administration  
and  
City and County of Honolulu  
Department of Transportation Services

# Table of Contents

<b>CHAPTER 1 OVERVIEW .....</b>	<b>1-1</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2 AGENCIES AND ROLES.....</b>	<b>2-1</b>
<b>Lead Agencies .....</b>	<b>2-1</b>
Federal Transit Administration.....	2-1
City and County of Honolulu, Department of Transportation Services.....	2-1
<b>Cooperating Agencies.....</b>	<b>2-2</b>
Responsibilities of Cooperating Agencies .....	2-2
Agencies Requested to Participate as Cooperating Agencies .....	2-3
<b>Participating Agencies.....</b>	<b>2-3</b>
Responsibilities of Participating Agencies .....	2-4
Agencies Invited to Participate as Participating Agencies.....	2-4
<b>CHAPTER 3 COORDINATION STRUCTURE.....</b>	<b>3-1</b>
<b>Early Coordination.....</b>	<b>3-1</b>
<b>Coordination during Project Development.....</b>	<b>3-2</b>
<b>Coordination Prior to Issuing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.....</b>	<b>3-2</b>
<b>Coordination Subsequent to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Prior to the Record of Decision.....</b>	<b>3-2</b>
<b>Coordination Subsequent to the Record of Decision.....</b>	<b>3-2</b>
<b>CHAPTER 4 SCHEDULE OF COORDINATION ACTIVITIES.....</b>	<b>4-1</b>
<b>CHAPTER 5 ISSUE RESOLUTION PROCESS .....</b>	<b>5-1</b>

## List of Figures

Figure 1-1. Project Vicinity .....	1-1
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and the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

SAFETEA-LU was signed into law on August 10, 2005, refining the programmatic framework for Federal surface transportation projects. SAFETEA-LU includes several provisions intended to enhance the consideration of environmental issues and impacts within the transportation planning process, including Section 6002 for Efficient Environmental Reviews for Project Decisionmaking.

Among the tools mandated by Section 6002 is the lead agency's development of a Coordination Plan (CP) addressing how coordination and communication with agencies and the public will occur throughout the NEPA process. A participating agency is a Federal, State, tribal, or local government agency that has an interest in the project and has agreed to participate in the NEPA and scoping processes. A cooperating agency is any Federal agency (or in special cases a State or local agency), other than a lead agency, that has jurisdiction or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in the proposed project. Participating and cooperating agencies play a critical role in defining the project and identifying issues of concern in areas such as Purpose and Need, Range of Alternatives, and Methodologies. Dually, an agency's participation in the project fulfills the purpose of propagating the mission of the agency.

SAFETEA-LU establishes a 30-day maximum comment period that will be enforced throughout the duration of the project to facilitate a timely review. If an agency feels it has been wrongly classified or tasked with inappropriate responsibilities, that agency should contact FTA or DTS to coordinate on the appropriate level of involvement.

This plan presents the roles and responsibilities of the lead, cooperating and participating agencies and the opportunities for participation at several steps in the EIS process, including the following:

- Publication of the Notice of Intent and scoping activities
- Development of Purpose and Need
- Identification of the range of alternatives
- Collaboration on methodologies
- Completion of the draft EIS
- Identification of the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) and the level of design detail
- Completion of the final EIS
- Completion of the Record of Decision (ROD)
- Completion of permits, licenses, or approvals after the ROD.

In addition to the agency coordination addressed in this plan, the project will include ongoing public involvement, as outlined in the project's public involvement plan.

### **Lead Agencies**

The lead agencies must perform the functions that they have traditionally performed in preparing an EIS in accordance with [23 CFR part 771](#) and [40 CFR parts 1500-1508](#). In addition, the lead agencies now must identify and involve participating agencies; develop coordination plans; provide opportunities for public and participating agency involvement in defining the Purpose and Need and determining the range of alternatives; and collaborate with participating agencies in determining methodologies and the level of detail for the analysis of the alternatives. Lead agencies also must provide increased oversight in managing the process and resolving issues.

#### ***Federal Transit Administration***

The FTA is the federal lead agency. The agency's responsibilities include the following:

- Ensure that the EIS required under NEPA is completed in accordance with SAFETEA-LU and applicable federal law
- Provide oversight in managing the process and resolving issues
- Facilitate the timely and adequate delivery of the environmental review process
- Be responsible for the content of the EIS, furnish guidance, independently evaluate and approve documents, and ensure that project sponsors comply with mitigation commitments
- Make the decision regarding the Purpose and Need to be used in the NEPA evaluation and range of alternatives to be evaluated in the NEPA document in consultation with the joint lead agency and after consideration of input from the public and participating agencies
- Accept the identification of the Locally Preferred Alternative
- Decide, in consultation with the joint lead agency, whether to develop the Locally Preferred Alternative to a higher level of detail.

#### ***City and County of Honolulu, Department of Transportation Services***

The DTS is the project sponsor, joint lead agency for the NEPA process, and lead agency for the Hawai'i Chapter 343 process. The primary responsibility of DTS will be as follows:

- Prepare the environmental document for the Locally Preferred Alternative defined by the City Council of Honolulu and determined by the City Administration, as outlined in Ordinance 07-001.



And, in conjunction with FTA, its responsibilities include the following :

- Identify and involve participating and cooperating agencies
- Develop coordination plans
- Provide information that will serve as a basis for public and participating agency input on key decisions that will be made by FTA and DTS
- Provide opportunities for public and participating agency involvement in defining the Purpose and Need and determining the range of alternatives
- Collaborate with participating agencies in determining methodologies and the level of detail for the analysis of alternatives
- Use the scoping process to solicit public and agency input on methodologies for screening of transit technologies.

## **Cooperating Agencies**

According to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) ([40 CFR 1508.5](#)), “cooperating agency” means any Federal agency, other than a lead agency, that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposed project or project alternative. A State or local agency of similar qualifications may, by agreement with the lead agencies, also become a cooperating agency.

The CEQ regulations ([40 CFR Section 1501.6](#)) permit a cooperating agency to “assume on request of the lead agency responsibility for developing information and preparing environmental analyses including portions of the environmental impact statement concerning which the cooperating agency has special expertise.” An additional distinction is that, pursuant to [40 CFR 1506.3](#), “a cooperating agency may adopt without recirculating the environmental impact statement of a lead agency when, after an independent review of the statement, the cooperating agency concludes that its comments and suggestions have been satisfied.”

## **Responsibilities of Cooperating Agencies**

The responsibilities of cooperating agencies will be as follows:

- Fulfill the responsibilities of the participating agencies (see below)
- Assume (on request of the lead agency) responsibility for developing information and preparing environmental analyses, including portions of the environmental impact statement concerning which the cooperating agency has special expertise
- Participate in meetings and field reviews
- Make support staff available (at the request of FTA)
- Use their own resources and funds to fulfill their responsibilities

- Review preliminary drafts of the draft EIS and final EIS
- Provide written comment within 15 days of the receipt of information and request for comment at each of the NEPA milestones
- If the 15-day review and comment period can not be met or if the agency requires additional information, request a 15-day extension or the additional information within the initial 15-day period. The cooperating agency must generate documentation that describes the missing information and why it is needed for the review at hand
- If the agency has not commented within 30 days, the lack of comment signifies that the agency has no comment on the information received
- May adopt the environmental impact statement of the lead agency, without recirculation, when the cooperating agency concludes that its comments and suggestions have been satisfied.

### ***Cooperating Agencies***

U.S. Department of Defense (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers): The proposed project likely will require the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers approval related to streams along the alignment

U.S. Department of Defense (U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii): The proposed project likely will require the U.S. Army approval related to crossing U.S. Army property

U.S. Department of Homeland Security (U.S. Coast Guard – 14<sup>th</sup> Coast Guard District): The proposed project likely will require the U.S. Coast Guard approval related to crossing streams

U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration: The proposed project likely will require the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration approval related to access to the interstate system

State of Hawai‘i, Department of Transportation: The proposed project will require the State of Hawai‘i Department of Transportation approval related to use of state right-of-way

### **Participating Agencies**

Participating agencies are those with an interest in the project. The standard for participating agency status is more encompassing than the standard for cooperating agency status described previously. Therefore, cooperating agencies are, by definition, participating agencies, but not all participating agencies are cooperating agencies.



## ***Responsibilities of Participating Agencies***

The responsibilities of the participating agencies will be as follows:

- Provide input on the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project and the schedule
- Participate in the NEPA process starting at the earliest possible time
- Identify, as early as practicable, any issues of concern regarding the project's potential environmental or socioeconomic impacts or any issues that could substantially delay or prevent an agency from granting a permit or other approval needed for the project
- Work cooperatively with DTS to resolve any issues that could result in denial of any approvals for the project
- Participate in the issues resolution process identified in this document
- Provide input on Purpose and Need, range of alternatives, methodologies, and level of detail to be used in the analysis of alternatives
- Provide input on how the performance of alternatives will be evaluated or how the impacts of alternatives on various resources will be assessed
- Provide meaningful and timely input on unresolved issues
- Limit the scope of comments to areas of expertise or jurisdiction
- Provide written comment within 15 days of the receipt of information and request for comment at each of the NEPA milestones
- If the 15-day review and comment period can not be met or if the agency requires additional information, request a 15-day extension or the additional information within the initial 15-day period. The participating agency must generate documentation that describes the missing information and why it is needed for the review at hand
- If the agency has not commented within 30 days, the lack of comment signifies that the agency has no comment on the information received.

## ***Participating Agencies***

U.S. Department of Agriculture (Natural Resource Conservation Service)

U.S. Department of Defense (U.S. Naval Base Pearl Harbor)

U.S. Department of the Interior (Fish and Wildlife Service)

U.S. Department of the Interior (National Park Service)

U.S. Department of the Interior (U.S. Geological Survey Pacific Island Ecosystems Research Center)

U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency

State of Hawai‘i Department of Accounting and General Services

State of Hawai‘i Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism

State of Hawai‘i Department of Defense

State of Hawai‘i Department of Education

State of Hawai‘i, Department of Hawaiian Home Lands

State of Hawai‘i Department of Health

State of Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources

State of Hawaii, Department of Land and Natural Resources (State Historic Preservation Division)

State of Hawai‘i Hawaii Community Development Authority

State of Hawai‘i, Office of Environmental Quality Control

State of Hawai‘i Office of Hawaiian Affairs

State of Hawai‘i University of Hawai‘i.

Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Coordination will be an ongoing process with increased emphasis on the following decision milestones:

- Publication of the Notice of Intent and scoping activities
- Development of the Purpose and Need
- Identification of the range of alternatives
- Collaboration on methodologies
- Completion of the draft EIS
- Identification of the Locally Preferred Alternative and the level of design detail
- Completion of the final EIS
- Completion of the ROD
- Completion of permits, licenses, or approvals after the ROD

Coordination will be completed in several ways, depending on the needs at each individual step. The coordination will include meetings with participating agencies and the public, correspondence with individual agencies related to the areas of their expertise, and distribution of preliminary documents to cooperating agencies for their review and comment.

### **Early Coordination**

Early coordination includes an opportunity for participating agencies to provide input and guidance on the scope of the EIS, Purpose and Need, and range of alternatives. Concurrent with issuance of the Notice of Intent, participating agencies will be provided a scoping information package that includes project background, elements of the environment identified for analysis in the draft EIS, the proposed Purpose and Need, and the proposed range of alternatives to be evaluated in the EIS. The information will be developed considering comments from previous scoping and public involvement activities and the conclusions of the transportation planning process that culminated in the issuance of an Alternatives Analysis Report and the selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative. The Locally Preferred Alternative will be presented during scoping for the EIS.

After considering this input, the lead agencies will decide the project's Purpose and Need. Per previous guidance issued by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), which was affirmed by Congress in its conference report on SAFETEA-LU, other Federal agencies should afford substantial deference to the FTA's articulation of the Purpose and Need for a transportation action.

Agencies that desire coordination during the development of methods that will be used to evaluate the effects of the alternatives on specific elements of the environment should identify their interest in coordination during the scoping process.

## **Coordination during Project Development**

Ongoing coordination will be undertaken with agencies identified during the scoping process as having interest or specific expertise in elements of the environment. Meetings with individual agencies will be held to finalize methods and to collect data pertaining to the project.

## **Coordination Prior to Issuing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement**

Cooperating agencies will receive a preliminary copy of the draft EIS to review and provide comment on prior to distribution of the draft EIS. This will provide agencies an opportunity to determine that the document addresses issues of concern to the agency and for the lead agencies, another review to ensure the completeness of the draft EIS. This process should provide an opportunity to address the concerns of the cooperating agencies in the draft EIS and preclude their need to issue comments on the draft EIS.

Participating agencies that are not cooperating agencies will receive a notice of the availability of the draft EIS and will be invited to attend EIS hearings and, to review and comment on the draft EIS.

## **Coordination Subsequent to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Prior to the Record of Decision**

Coordination on the final EIS and ROD will be similar to coordination prior to issuing the draft EIS. Cooperating agencies will receive a preliminary copy of the final EIS to review and provide comment on prior to distribution of the final EIS. Participating agencies that are not cooperating agencies will receive a notice of the availability for the final EIS. All participating agencies will receive notification of the issuance of the ROD.

## **Coordination Subsequent to the Record of Decision**

Agencies with permitting authority will continue to be consulted during permit application development. Permit applications will be submitted and data will be developed to support needs identified by the permitting agencies.

## **Chapter 4      Schedule of Coordination Activities**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Date</b>
Letters of invitation	To identify the status of agencies and invite project participation	March 2007
Project Scoping	To collect agency input on the Purpose and Need, Alternatives, and scope of analysis for the EIS	March - April 2007
Ongoing consultations with individual agencies	To develop analysis methodologies and collect pertinent information related to the alternatives	2007
Preliminary draft EIS	To solicit comments from cooperating agencies on the materials to be included in the draft EIS	Winter 2007 - 2008
Draft EIS	To solicit comments from agencies and the public on the analysis included in the draft EIS	Spring 2008
Preliminary Final EIS	To solicit comments from cooperating agencies on the content of the final EIS	Fall 2008
Final EIS	To notify agencies and the public on the findings of the final EIS	Winter 2008
ROD	To notify agencies and the public of the project's environmental clearance	Mid-2009
Permits	To obtain permits required for project completion	2008 through construction

The lead agencies, cooperating agencies, and participating agencies shall work cooperatively in accordance with this section to identify and resolve issues that could delay completion of the environmental review process or could result in denial of any approvals required for the project under applicable laws.

Based on information received from the lead agencies, participating agencies and cooperating agencies shall identify, as early as practicable, any issues of concern regarding the project's potential environmental or socioeconomic impacts. Issues of concern include any issues that could substantially delay or prevent an agency from granting a permit or other approval that is needed for the project.

The following issues resolution process shall be followed:

- Meetings will be held as needed during the course of the NEPA process to discuss and resolve issues
- If issues are not being resolved in a timely manner:
  1. An official issues resolution meeting will be scheduled
  2. If resolution cannot be achieved within 30 days following such a meeting and a determination has been made by the FTA that all information necessary to resolve the issues has been obtained, then:
    - a. FTA will notify the heads of all participating agencies, cooperating agencies, DTS, the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives, and the Council of Environmental Quality of the FTA determination, and
    - b. FTA will publish such notice in the Federal Register.